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Our File No.: 114122

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

Eleanor L. Perez, individually and on behalf of all others
similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

Gatestone & Co. International, Inc.,

Defendant.

Docket No:

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

BARSHAY | SANDERS PLLC
100 GARDEN CITY PLAZA, SUITE 500
GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK 11530

Eleanor L. Perez, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated (hereinafter referred to as “*Plaintiff*”), by and through the undersigned counsel, complains, states and alleges against Gatestone & Co. International, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as “*Defendant*”), as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. This action seeks to recover for violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, *et seq.* (“FDCPA”).

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has federal subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(d).

3. Venue is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claim occurred in this Judicial District.

4. At all relevant times, Defendant conducted business within the State of New York.

PARTIES

5. Plaintiff Eleanor L. Perez is an individual who is a citizen of the State of New York residing in Suffolk County, New York.

6. Plaintiff is a “consumer” as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).

7. On information and belief, Defendant Gatestone & Co. International, Inc., is a Delaware Corporation with a principal place of business in New Castle County, Delaware.

8. Defendant is regularly engaged, for profit, in the collection of debts allegedly owed by consumers.

9. Defendant is a “debt collector” as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).

ALLEGATIONS

10. Defendant alleges Plaintiff owes a debt (“the Debt”).

11. The Debt was primarily for personal, family or household purposes and is therefore a “debt” as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).

12. Sometime after the incurrence of the Debt, Plaintiff fell behind on payments owed.

13. Thereafter, at an exact time known only to Defendant, the Debt was assigned or otherwise transferred to Defendant for collection.

14. In its efforts to collect the debt, Defendant contacted Plaintiff by letter (“the Letter”) dated June 28, 2017. (“**Exhibit 1.**”)

15. The Letter was the initial communication Plaintiff received from Defendant.

16. The Letter is a “communication” as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).

17. The Letter sets forth “Amount Owing” \$3,084.71.

18. The Letter states, “The account balance may be periodically increased due to the addition of accrued interest or other charges as provided in the agreement with the original creditor or as otherwise provided by law.”

19. The Letter fails to provide information that would allow Plaintiff to determine what Plaintiff will need to pay to resolve the debt at any given moment in the future.

20. The Letter fails to provide information that would allow the least sophisticated consumer to determine what he or she will need to pay to resolve the debt at any given moment in the future.

21. The Letter fails to provide information that would allow the least sophisticated consumer to determine the amount of interest owed.

22. For instance, the Letter fails to indicate the applicable interest rate.

23. For instance, the Letter fails to indicate the date of accrual of interest.

24. For instance, the Letter fails to indicate the amount of interest during any measurable period.

25. The Letter fails to contain an explanation, understandable by the least sophisticated consumer, of any fees and interest that may cause the amount stated to increase.

26. The Letter fails to provide information that would allow the least sophisticated consumer to determine the amount of costs owed.

27. For instance, the Letter fails to indicate the source of the “other charges.”

28. For instance, the Letter fails to indicate the date “other charges” will be applied.

29. For instance, the Letter fails to indicate the amount of “other charges” that will be added during any measurable period.

30. The Letter fails to state what part of the amount stated is attributable to principal.

31. The Letter fails to state what part of the amount stated is attributable to interest.

32. The Letter fails to state what part of the amount stated is attributable to late fees.

33. The Letter fails to state what part of the amount stated is attributable to other fees.

34. The Letter fails to state what part of the amount stated is attributable to “other charges.”

35. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, would render the least sophisticated consumer unable to determine the minimum amount owed at the time of the Letter.

36. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, would render the least sophisticated consumer unable to determine what she will need to pay to resolve the debt at any given moment in the future.

37. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, would render the least sophisticated consumer unable to determine the amount of his or her debt.

38. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, did not convey the amount of the debt clearly from the perspective of the least sophisticated consumer.

39. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, did not convey the amount of the debt accurately from the perspective of the least sophisticated consumer.

40. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, did not convey the amount of the debt without ambiguity from the perspective of the least sophisticated consumer.

41. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, violates 15 U.S.C. § 1692e and 15 U.S.C. § 1692g. *See Balke v. Alliance One Receivables Management, Inc.*, No. 16-CV-5624(ADS)(AKT), 2017 WL 2634653 (E.D.N.Y. June 19, 2017).

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

42. Plaintiff brings this action individually and as a class action on behalf of all persons similarly situated in the State of New York from whom Defendant attempted to collect a consumer debt using a collection letter that states, “The account balance may be periodically increased due to the addition of accrued interest or other charges as provided in the agreement with the original creditor or as otherwise provided by law,” from one year before the date of this Complaint to the present.

43. This action seeks a finding that Defendant’s conduct violates the FDCPA, and asks that the Court award damages as authorized by 15 U.S.C. § 1692k.

44. Defendant regularly engages in debt collection.

45. The Class consists of more than 35 persons from whom Defendant attempted to collect delinquent consumer debts using a collection letter that states, “The account balance may be periodically increased due to the addition of accrued interest or other charges as provided in the agreement with the original creditor or as otherwise provided by law.”

46. Plaintiff’s claims are typical of the claims of the Class. Common questions of law or fact raised by this class action complaint affect all members of the Class and predominate over any individual issues. Common relief is therefore sought on behalf of all members of the Class. This class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy.

47. The prosecution of separate actions by individual members of the Class would create a risk of inconsistent or varying adjudications with respect to the individual members of the Class, and a risk that any adjudications with respect to individual members of the Class would, as a practical matter, either be dispositive of the interests of other members of the Class not party to the adjudication, or substantially impair or impede their ability to protect their interests. Defendant has acted in a manner applicable to the Class as a whole such that

declaratory relief is warranted.

48. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect and represent the interests of the Class. The management of the class action proposed is not extraordinarily difficult, and the factual and legal issues raised by this class action complaint will not require extended contact with the members of the Class, because Defendant's conduct was perpetrated on all members of the Class and will be established by common proof. Moreover, Plaintiff has retained counsel experienced in actions brought under consumer protection laws.

JURY DEMAND

49. Plaintiff hereby demands a trial of this action by jury.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests judgment as follows:

- a. Certify this action as a class action; and
- b. Appoint Plaintiff as Class Representative of the Class, and Plaintiff's attorneys as Class Counsel; and
- c. Find that Defendant's actions violate the FDCPA; and
- d. Grant damages against Defendant pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k; and
- e. Grant Plaintiff's attorneys' fees pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k; and
- f. Grant Plaintiff's costs; together with
- g. Such other relief that the Court determines is just and proper.

DATED: October 25, 2017

BARSHAY SANDERS, PLLC

By: /s/ Craig B. Sanders
Craig B. Sanders, Esq.
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Garden City, New York 11530
Tel: (516) 203-7600
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GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK 11530

csanders@barshaysanders.com
Attorneys for Plaintiff
Our File No.: 114122

	G A T E S T O N E
	Visit our website: www.gatestoneco.com 800-678-3052 Our hours of operation are Mon – Fri 8:00am to 5:00pm EST
Date: June 28, 2017 Reference #: [REDACTED] 0058 Creditor: American Express Account #: ***** [REDACTED] 2006 Amount Owning: \$3,084.71	

000263 000001999



ELEANOR PEREZ
34 S DEBUSY RD
MONTAUK NY 11954-5059



Dear Sir/Mme.,

Your account has been placed with Gatestone & Co. International Inc., a collection agency. This communication from a debt collector is an attempt to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. Calls to or from our company may be monitored or recorded for quality assurance purposes.

Unless you notify this office within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of the debt or any portion thereof, this office will assume this debt is valid. If you notify this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice, this office will obtain verification of the debt or obtain a copy of a judgment and mail you a copy of such judgment or verification. If you request this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice, this office will provide you with the name and address of the original creditor, if different from the current creditor.

The account balance may be periodically increased due to the addition of accrued interest or other charges as provided in your agreement with the original creditor or as otherwise provided by law.

Should you have any questions concerning your payment or your account, please telephone our office. Please make sure that your payment clearly identifies your name and that of your creditor so that payment can be properly applied to your account. All payments mailed to this office should be payable to Gatestone & Co. International Inc.

Sincerely,
SAMIYA AHMAD
(866) 251-2396

UX

Notice: See Reverse Side for Important Information

Please Detach and Return This Portion with Payment

Option 1: Make Check Payable to: Gatestone & Co. International Inc.

Option 2: Pre-Authorized — Auto Pay []

Routing No. _____

Name of Bank _____

Check No. _____

Account No. _____

Name of Account Holder _____

Signature _____

Payment Amount \$ _____

Reference # [REDACTED] 0058

Company: Gatestone & Co. International Inc. (Loc. 71)

ELEANOR PEREZ
34 S DEBUSY RD
MONTAUK, NY 11954

Gatestone & Co. International Inc.
1000 N. West Street, Suite 1200
Wilmington, DE 19801

By mailing your check you authorize Gatestone & Co. International Inc. to debit your account, one time for the amount of the check, via an electronic fund transfer (EFT). Funds may be withdrawn from your account as soon as the same day payment is received. In the event your check is returned unpaid for insufficient or uncollected funds, we may re-present your check. Your check will not be returned by your financial institution.

Important Information About Your Debt

We are required under state law to notify consumers of the following rights. This list does not contain a complete list of the rights consumers have under state and federal law.

NEW YORK STATE: Debt collectors, in accordance with the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692 et seq., are prohibited from engaging in abusive, deceptive, and unfair debt collection efforts, including but not limited to:

- (i) The use or threat of violence;
- (ii) The use of obscene or profane language; and
- (iii) Repeated phone calls made with the intent to annoy, abuse, or harass.

If a creditor or debt collector receives a money judgment against you in court, state and federal laws may prevent the following types of income from being taken to pay the debt:

- 1. Supplemental security income, (SSI);
- 2. Social security;
- 3. Public assistance (welfare);
- 4. Spousal support, maintenance (alimony) or child support;
- 5. Unemployment benefits;
- 6. Disability benefits;
- 7. Workers' compensation benefits;
- 8. Public or private pensions;
- 9. Veterans' benefits;
- 10. Federal student loans, federal student grants, and federal work study funds; and
- 11. Ninety percent of your wages or salary earned in the last sixty days.

This collection agency is licensed by the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs, license number 1023996.

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS: ELEANOR L. PEREZ
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff: SUFFOLK
(c) Attorneys: BARSHAY SANDERS, PLLC
DEFENDANTS: GATESTONE & CO. INTERNATIONAL, INC.
County of Residence of First Listed Defendant: NEW CASTLE
NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)
O 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff
O 2 U.S. Government Defendant
O 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)
O 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)
Citizen of This State
Citizen of Another State
Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
CONTRACT
REAL PROPERTY
PERSONAL INJURY
CIVIL RIGHTS
PRISONER PETITIONS
FORFEITURE/PENALTY
LABOR
IMMIGRATION
BANKRUPTCY
SOCIAL SECURITY
FEDERAL TAX SUITS
OTHER STATUTES

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
O 1 Original Proceeding
O 2 Removed from State Court
O 3 Remanded from Appellate Court
O 4 Reinstated or Reopened
O 5 Transferred from Another District (specify)
O 6 Multidistrict Litigation - Transfer
O 8 Multidistrict Litigation - Direct File

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION
Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity): 15 USC §1692
Brief description of cause: 15 USC §1692 Fair Debt Collection Practices Act Violation

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:
CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.
DEMAND \$
CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:
JURY DEMAND: Yes O No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY
(See Instructions)
JUDGE
DOCKET NUMBER

DATE: November 8, 2017
SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD: /s Craig B. Sanders

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
RECEIPT # AMOUNT APPLYING IFP JUDGE MAG. JUDGE

CERTIFICATION OF ARBITRATION ELIGIBILITY

Local Arbitration Rule 83.10 provides that with certain exceptions, actions seeking money damages only in an amount not in excess of \$150,000, exclusive of interest and costs, are eligible for compulsory arbitration. The amount of damages is presumed to be below the threshold amount unless a certification to the contrary is filed.

I, Craig B. Sanders, counsel for Plaintiff, do hereby certify that the above captioned civil action is ineligible for compulsory arbitration for the following reason(s):

- monetary damages sought are in excess of \$150,000, exclusive of interest and costs,
- the complaint seeks injunctive relief,
- the matter is otherwise ineligible for the following reason

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT - FEDERAL RULES CIVIL PROCEDURE 7.1

Identify any parent corporation and any publicly held corporation that owns 10% or more of its stocks:

RELATED CASE STATEMENT (Section VIII on the Front of this Form)

Please list all cases that are arguably related pursuant to Division of Business Rule 50.3.1 in Section VIII on the front of this form. Rule 50.3.1 (a) provides that "A civil case is "related" to another civil case for purposes of this guideline when, because of the similarity of facts and legal issues or because the cases arise from the same transactions or events, a substantial saving of judicial resources is likely to result from assigning both cases to the same judge and magistrate judge." Rule 50.3.1 (b) provides that " A civil case shall not be deemed "related" to another civil case merely because the civil case: (A) involves identical legal issues, or (B) involves the same parties." Rule 50.3.1 (c) further provides that "Presumptively, and subject to the power of a judge to determine otherwise pursuant to paragraph (d), civil cases shall not be deemed to be "related" unless both cases are still pending before the court."

NY-E DIVISION OF BUSINESS RULE 50.1(d)(2)

1. Is the civil action being filed in the Eastern District removed from a New York State Court located in Nassau or Suffolk County: NO
2. If you answered "no" above:
 - a) Did the events or omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in Nassau or Suffolk County? YES
 - b) Did the events or omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in the Eastern District? YES

If your answer to question 2 (b) is "No," does the defendant (or a majority of the defendants, if there is more than one) reside in Nassau or Suffolk County, or, in an interpleader action, does the claimant (or a majority of the claimants, if there is more than one) reside in Nassau or Suffolk County? _____

(Note: A corporation shall be considered a resident of the County in which it has the most significant contacts).

BAR ADMISSION

I am currently admitted in the Eastern District of New York and currently a member in good standing of the bar of this court.
 Yes No

Are you currently the subject of any disciplinary action (s) in this or any other state or federal court?
 Yes (If yes, please explain) No

I certify the accuracy of all information provided above.

Signature: /s Craig B. Sanders

AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Eleanor L. Perez, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated)	
_____)	
<i>Plaintiff(s)</i>)	
)	Civil Action No.
v.)	
)	
Gatestone & Co. International, Inc.)	
_____)	
<i>Defendant(s)</i>)	

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: *(Defendant's name and address)*
Gatestone & Co. International, Inc.
100 N. West Street , Suite 1200
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) – or 60 days if you are the United States, or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) – you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff’s attorney, whose name and address are:

BARSHAY SANDERS PLLC
100 GARDEN CITY PLAZA, SUITE 500
GARDEN CITY, NY 11530

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

CLERK OF COURT

Date: _____

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: [Woman Sues Gatestone & Co. Over 'Misleading' Collection Letter](#)
